1. A hidden storage system for a vehicle having side panels and which does not substantially alter the external appearance of the vehicle, comprising:

at least one storage box having an interior mounted on at least one side of said vehicle;

at least one section of a side panel on at least said one side of said vehicle being hinged, whereby same can be opened to expose the interior of said storage box and closed to cover the interior of said storage box;

at least one hidden latch mechanism mounted to releasably secure said at least one hinged section of said fender/side panel; and lock means for actuating said at least one latch mechanism.

- 2. The hidden storage system of Claim 1, wherein said vehicle of the office of the storage box evers at least one of said wheel wells and extends forward and rearward therefrom.
- 3. The hidden storage system of Claim 1, wherein said at least one storage box is constructed to extend along at least a section of the floor of said vehicle.
- 4. The hidden storage system of Claim 1, wherein said latch mechanism is hidden and includes a plurality of cooperating latch members adapted to be mounted on said storage box and said hinged section of said bild panel.

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5. The hidden storage system of Claim 1, wherein said took means is selected from the group consisting of mechanically activated means and electrically activated means.

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- one storage box is provided with at reast one shelf in the interior thereof.
- 7. The hidden storage system of Claim 1, wherein each side of said vehicle is provided with at least one storage box having an interior, are said such at least one hinged side panel section, and at least one latch mechanism.
- 8. The hidden storage system of Claim 7, wherein the latch mechanism on each side of said vehicle has a separate lock means.
- 9 The hidden storage system of Claim 1, wherein said lock means is positioned at an end of said at least one storage box.
- The hidden storage system of Claim 1, additionally including at least one strut assembly operatively connected to retain said at least one hinged section of said side panel in a raised position.

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11. The hidden storage system of Claim 10, wherein said at least one strut assembly is provided with means selected from the group consisting of insulating means, heating means, and heating and insulating means.

additionally includes at least another section thereof which is hinged such that it can be lowered or raised to expose the interior of said storage box.

panel includes at least two sections hinged to enable raising each, lowering each, or raising one and lowering the other.

14. The hidden storage system of Claim 1, additionally including at least one drain/air relief valve assembly mounted in said at least one storage box

comprising:

at least one hinged side panel section,

at least one storage box having an interior located adjacent said hinged side panel section, and

a lock/latch mechanism for said at least one hinged side panel,

said hidden storage system being constructed to not substantially alter the external appearance of the side panels of the vehicle.

16. The hidden storage system of Claim 15, wherein said hinged side panel section is hinged to open upwardly or downwardly.

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- The hidden storage system of Claim 15, additionally including **17**. means for retaining said hinged side panel section in an open position.
- 18. The hidden storage system of Claim 18, additionally including at least one shelf in the interior of said storage box.
- The hidden storage system of Claim 15, wherein said storage 19. box and said hinged side panel section extend along a length of said vehicle intermediate a door and a rear end of said vehicle.
- In the vehicle of Claim/15, a hidden storage system located 20. on each side of said vehicle.
- 21. The Midden storage system of Claim 15, additionally including at least one drain/air relief valve assembly mounted in said at least one storage box.
- 22. A method for producing a hidden storage system in a vehicle having side/panels with only minor alteration of the external appearance of the vehicle side panels, said method being selected from the group consisting of assembly line fabrication, modular fabrication and assembly, and ret/rofit of an existing vehicle.
- A method of automatically relieving air and providing draining in a storage compartment, comprising:

forming an opening in the storage compartment, and

(mounting a drain/air relief valve assembly in the open)

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